Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies

Vol. 5, No 3 (2008)

ISSN: 1117 - 5257
All rights reserved

Editorial Collective

Editor: I. O. Alaba
Associate Editors: D.G. Nwagbo; A. Uba Mgbemena; O.J. Ajiboye; O. O. Ajikobi, E.E. Okafor

Production Editor: Dr. Iwu Ikwubuzo

Editorial Advisers:
Prof. Muhammed Nur Alkali, University of Maiduguri, Maiduguri
Prof. R.N. Egudu, University of Benin, Benin City
Prof. V. C. Uchendu, University of Calabar, Calabar

Editorial Policy

Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies is devoted to publishing scholarly works on African Literatures, Languages and Cultures. The name Ihafa is derived from three indigenous Nigerian words: afa (Igbo), Ifa (Yoruba), and Ilha (Edo). These words translate as divination—a repository of wisdom and knowledge in our traditional society. The languages from which these words are derived are the ones originally taught in the Department of African and Asian Studies, University of Lagos. We welcome serious, well researched articles written in English. Articles could be descriptive or theoretical.

Ihafa is published annually and apart from scholarly articles, we also welcome book reviews and correspondence on issues arising from publications in the journal. Diskettes and copies of typescripts not exceeding 15 pages of double-spaced A4 paper, with references at the end, should be sent to:

The Editor,
Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies,
Department of Linguistics, African & Asian Studies,
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria
e-mail: laastirunilag.edu
Subscription
(2 Issues Per Year)

Within Nigeria
Individuals – N1,500
Institutions – N3,000

Within Africa
Individuals – $25.00
Institutions – $50.00

Outside Africa
Individuals – $35
Institutions – $50

(For individuals and institutions outside Nigeria, all rates are inclusive of the cost of postage)

All subscription requests and queries should be sent to:

Editor’s Address:

The Editor,
Ihafa: A Journal of African Studies,
Department of Linguistics, African & Asian Studies,
University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos, Nigeria

e-mail: laas@unilag.edu

ERRATA

Editorial Collective on page II (Roman Figure) The correct initials of one of the Associate Editors should be O. G. Nwagbo and not D. G. as printed. Also, Nobuhle Ndimande-Hlongwa is from University of KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa (pg. 20)
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners’ Adoption of Learning Strategies in an African Language Classroom:</td>
<td>1 - 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Akinloye Ojo</strong> (<em>University of Georgia, Athens</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Critical Discussion of the Language Policy of the University of Kwazulu-Natal and Challenges for Implementation:</td>
<td>20 - 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nobunle Ndimande-Hlongwa</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosodic Structure Preservation and English Loanwords in Yoruba: A Constraint-Based Account:</td>
<td>38 - 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Francis O. Oyebade</strong> (<em>Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Loanwords in Edo:</td>
<td>57 - 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harrison Adeniyi</strong> (<em>Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conceptualizing the Reality of the Millennium Development Goals in Fagunwa’s Tradition Novels:</td>
<td>76 - 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arinpe Adejumo</strong> (<em>University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Morphosyntax of èwọn:</td>
<td>96-107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oladipo Ajiboye</strong> (<em>University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constituent Negation in the Ào Dialect of Yoruba:</td>
<td>108 - 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Oye Taiwo</strong> (<em>University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Adverbs in Yoruba:</td>
<td>132 - 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ayọ Yusuff</strong> (<em>University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria</em>)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
High-Low (HL) Tones Simplification in Mòbà Dialect of Yoruba:

Michael A. Abiódún  
(University of Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria) &  
Oladipé Ajíbóyè  
(University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria)  
146–156

A Lexico-semantic Analysis of ‘now’ and ‘sorry’ in Educated Yoruba English in South-Western Nigeria:

Bello, Oluwaseun Rachael  
(Department of English, Faculty of Arts LASU)  
157–174

Yoruba Literary Artists and Search for Social Discipline in Nigeria:

Bunmi Olujinmi  
(The Polytechnic, Ibadan)  
175–188

Animal Imagery in Selected Urhobo Proverbs and Their Educative Functions:

Felicia Ohwovoriole  
(University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria)  
189–205

Women in Traditional Religion:

Oluwakemisọla Idowu Qshọ  
(Lagos State College of Primary Education, Ẹpẹ, Lagos State, Nigeria)  
206–219

Women’s Violence against Women in Ofomata’s Dibia Na-Agwo Otoro (Medicine-man that cures diarrhea, where does he put his anus?):

Ebele E. Okafor  
(University of Lagos, Lagos, Nigeria)  
220–234

The African Novel and the Celebration of Life: The Example of Chinua Achebe:
**Julia Udofia**  
(*Lagos State University*)  
235 – 243

Polarity Focus in Dhaasanac:
**Sumiyo Nishiguchi**  
(*Osaka University, Tokyo, Japan*)  
244 – 259

Aspects of Narrative Technique of Time in S.J. Nkosi’s Usandenezwe Kasigwinyanasimbi:
**A.M. Maphumulo**  
(*University of KwaZulu-Natali, Republic of South Africa*)  
260 – 279

Reflections of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Láwuyì Ògúnníran’s Play –Ọmọ Aláte Ìlékè (Offspring-of-Owner-of-Tray-of-Beads):
**Olateju Adesọla**  
(*University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria*)  
280 – 300
Women’s Violence against Women in Ofomata’s *Dibia Na-Agwọ Otoro* (Medicine-man that cures diarrhea)

Okafor, Ebele E.

Abstract
Ofomata is a prolific Igbo novelist who hails from Ogbunka in Anambra State. His novel, *Dibia Na-agwọ Otoro* (2000), which has domestic violence as its theme portrays women as agents of disruption of peace and perpetrators of domestic violence. The novel depicts how the mother-in-law and the sister-in-law instigate domestic violence within the family.

It, however, discusses how women suffer hatred and jealousy in the hands of their fellow women, particularly mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law. In this novel, Ngozika suffers in the hands of Chioma, her sister-in-law, who uses diabolic means to divert her (Ngozika’s) husband’s interest from her in order to kill or maim her for life. But she (Chioma) faces disappointments and later suffers the consequences for her wickedness.

This paper highlights and examines some instances of domestic violence caused by women violence against women as portrayed in *Dibia Na-Agwọ Otoro*. It further looks at how domestic violence destabilizes the home and breaches the peace that is essential for cordial human relationship in the family. The paper also stresses the need to have a violence-free family, and recommends some measures that can be adopted to achieve this. The paper further stresses that for a meaningful relationships
among women to be achieved, women’s violence against women, needs to be discouraged.

Introduction
Violence is one way through which peace is disrupted in human society. Whenever it occurs, lives and property are destroyed, relationships are broken, and the surviving victims are left to suffer hardship. Just as the larger society, the family, which is the base of human relationship and interaction, does have its own experience of violence. Experiences have shown that we do have incidences of domestic violence within the family and when this happens; its consequences are no less devastating than when violence occurs in the larger society.

Domestic violence, in the case of ‘women violence against women’ is not only prevalent in society; it is a universal phenomenon that cuts across human race, religion, age, ethnicity, and geographical region. However, there is no universally accepted definition of domestic violence. Rather, definitions vary according to different perspectives, and are reflected in different policy responses from human rights and development organizations. Domestic violence as a topical issue began in the women’s movement as concern about wives being beaten by their husbands and has remained a major focus of modern feminism, particularly in terms of “violence against women” within and outside the family. The emphasis has tended to be on women as the victims of domestic violence because they suffer it most. Violence against women by men or women is widespread and has been women’s major concern in conferences and seminars.

What ‘Domestic Violence’ Means
The term ‘domestic’ comes from Old French word “domestique” and from Latin “domesticus” from domus, meaning “house”. It is also seen as “a fond of home life and household affairs. According to The American Heritage Dictionary of English, (2000), ‘violence’ means “acts of aggression and abuse that cause or intend to cause injury to person(s) (and by some definitions animals or
property). The term ‘violence’ also connotes an aggressive tendency to act out destructive behaviour. Violence can also be divided into two forms: random violence, which includes unpremeditated or small-scale violence, and co-ordinated violence, which includes actions carried out by sanctioned or unsanctioned violent groups—such as war (i.e. inter-societal violence), in some cases certain type of revolution or terrorism (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, 2007). According to encyclopedia (op cit), ‘domestic violence’ is subsumed under random violence. It is a violence that occurs when a husband, wife, brother or sister-in-law, mother-in-law, partner, son or daughter, father or mother, brother or sister, boyfriend of girlfriend, and aunt or uncle living in the same house, attempts to physically or psychologically harm the other, thereby causing uproar and disharmony in the family. According to Machera, (1997:27), United Nations (1990), uses the term narrowly to cover incidents of physical attacks. It may take the form of physical and sexual violations, such as punching, checking, stabbing, scalding, and burning with water and acid, or setting ablaze, the result of which can range from bruising to death. Generally, domestic violence can be in form of physical assault, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, mental or verbal abuse, rape, wife battery, infidelity, incest, lesbianism, homosexuality, humiliation, intimidation, economic deprivation, systematic criticism, degradation, choking, throwing objects, ridiculing, threats of violence, social isolation, forced abortions, hair-pulling, hitting, not allowing the wife to work or open a bank account, keeping all belongings in husband’s name, cruelty to children, forced sex, murder/homicide, arson, etc. Domestic violence is sometimes used to describe violence against women in the family while in other instances, where it is used as a general label covering any violation where the victims and the perpetrator have some form of personal and family relationship or where they have had a relationship in the past (Davies, 1994 in Machera, 1997:27-28). Domestic violence, therefore, encompasses violence against women by husband, mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and other relatives, who live in the same house. However, the victims of
domestic violence are mostly women and children. For what affects a mother, affects her children. Men can be victims of domestic violence. They can as well be abused by women. Ezinna is abused by his sister, Chioma, who uses diabolic means to divert his interest from his wife, Ngozika, and makes him hate Ngozika and his children to the extent of beating her up during her pregnancy. Basically, women are associated with the victims of domestic violence because they are outspoken about the epidemic of the abuse and violence against them. Children and adolescents live with parental domestic violence situations every day. At times, they are killed or maimed. At times they are confused and unable to talk about it because of the shame. Furthermore, women suffer violence from their husbands and family members, especially when the family members do not approve their marriages.

Ofomata in his novel exposes violence against women by women. As a contemporary writer, he brings out life in the society. Literature is seen by Opata (1989:38) "as a slice of life, as a reflection (mirror) of life, as a representation of life or as a recreation of life", novels, however, are reflections of family life. The novel, *Dibia Na-Agwo Otoro*, exposes women violence against women as one of the weapons that destabilizes family relationships. Family which is a critical feature of social and economic life is shown as a domain for women's violence against women. Every culture demands that harmony among women, between husbands and wives, and family stability be considered essential to social order. It is expected of the husband and wife, their sister-in-law and mother-in-law to live together peacefully. Love should be mutual and expressed by each party in the relationships. When, therefore, both parties quarrel or disagree, violence will set in and there will be instability and disorder in the family. For the purpose of this paper, instances of women's violence against women in *Dibia Na-Agwo Otoro* will be examined.
Instances of Women Violence against Women in Dibja Na-Agwọ-Otoro

Violence against women by men refers to abuse of women by their male family members such as husbands, fathers or any other male relatives (Machera, 1997:32). In the same way, violence against women by women entails abuse of women by their female family members such as wives, mothers or any other female relatives. Millions of women are confronted with violence at the hands of their husbands or in-laws every year within family. Violence, and the fear of it, limits women’s choices in virtually all areas of their lives. Pickup et al. (2001:2), postulates that “violence against women is pervasive and widespread”. However, it exists not only in Igbo community but in every community worldwide. According to Machera (1997), the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report notes that

In no society are women secure or treated equally to men. Personal insecurity shadows them from cradle to grave. In the household, they are the last to eat. At school, they are the last to be educated. At work, they are last to be through adulthood, they are abused because of their gender (UNDP, 1994:3).

As has been said earlier, women suffer violence from men or their fellow women such as the mothers-in-law or the sisters-in-law. The violence, at times result in physical, financial, sexual and psychological abuse or suffering occurring in public or private life, battery and other traditional harmful practices. Ezinna and Ngozikia’s family is peaceful and loving until Chioma, Ezinna’s sister comes into the scene. As the novels describes their harmonious relationship,

Ha abuọ na-ebi n’udo na ọnu. Okwu anaghị esere ha. O burụ na ha ghọtafio onwe ha, ha na-anọ n’uli ha doziere ya onwe ha (p.19).

(Two of them are living in peace and harmony. They do not quarrel. When they have misunderstanding, they stay in their house and solve it).
Chioma’s character in Ezinna’s house presents women negatively. It portrays women as pretenders and instigators of violence in the family. This is illustrated in the following excerpt:

If one looks at Chioma where she is seated, one would think she is a good person. Any person, who does not know, will not know that she is ‘one-who-enters and-brings-violence’, pretending as if she is of good behaviour).

Chioma causes violence in Ezinna’s house the day she steps into her father’s house. She exhibits wickedness by the way she reacts when her mother, Eberechukwu, tells her of Ngozika’s pregnancy, as the reason for her inability to fetch enough firewood for cooking in the house. She replies angrily,

(Pregnancy, is it the one I have carried several times, or is there any other thing. Who is being deceived).

This highlights the inhumane treatments women mete out on themselves, which portray them as their own worst enemies. Chioma, who is furious, rushes to Ezinna’s house to collect some firewood and in the cause of doing that she beats Ngozika, who is pregnant as the following excerpt indicates:

Chioma si Ngozika ka o si ebe ahụ o dina kulie ka o bia gosi ya nkụọ kpata ra ka o ga were siere onwe ya ihe o ga-eri... tupu o na-ekwucha ihe ndị a, Chioma agafealarị n’azụ ulọ, kpakọọọ nkụ niile ahụ o na-ekwu maka ya puwa... Ngozika were ije oṣọ oṣọ gakwute Chioma ebe o chị nkụ ahụ ala, metụ ya aka n’azụ, jùọ ya ma o bụ na o nughị ihe ahụ o riọrọ ya?... Chioma wee tugharja were aka nri na aka ekpe ya machie nwanyị a nti abụọ iji were gow ya ka o ghara imetụ ya aka oṣọ (p.24)
(Chioma tells Ngozika to get up from where she is lying and show the firewood she gets let her go and cook her food... before she finishes talking, Chioma has gone to the back of the house, collect all the firewood she is talking about and leaves... Ngozika walks fast and meets Chioma going with the firewood, touches her on the back, asks her whether she does not hear her pleading?... Chioma turns and slaps her both cheeks to inform her that she should not touch her again).

Chioma further warns Ngozika that:

*Ọ bụrụ na i kpachapughị anya gi n’ụlọ a, m gwa gi na ọ bụ m bụ Chioma. I kwusie okwu ike, i laa be nna gi, agaa m chotara nwanne m nwoke onye ọzọ ọ ga-alù. Agwala m gi na onye ga-abata n’ụlọ nnà m amaghị m, onye ahu anwughị anwu, o fuo efu... i di ime mmadụ adibeghị? (p.24).*

(If you do not take your time in this house, I will tell you that I am Chioma. If you talk more, you go back to your father’s house; I will bring another person my brother will marry. I have told you that any person that enters my father’s house does not know me, if that person does not die, she will be lost... you are pregnant another person has not become?).

In pain and agony, Ngozika reports to her mother-in-law about her daughter’s reaction towards her. But she does nothing serious and in her presence, Chioma warns Ngozika further

*Ọ bụrụ na ọ chọrọ ka ọ mọ nwa n’udo, ya akpokwala ya aha ọzo (p.25).*

(If she wants to be delivered of her baby in peace, she should not mention her name again).

Some mothers-in-law support their daughter’s misdemeanour in the family, while some fathers-in-law disapprove of it. This is evidence by the way Chukwuma, Ezinna’s father reacts against Chioma, his daughter concerning the case of beating up Ngozika, his daughter-in-law:

*Achọghị m iji anya m wee hụ onye ga-eweta nsogbu n’ezina ụlọ m a. Chioma... Echere m na i hapụla*
agwa ojọ. Ihe m ji agwa gi ihe a bu maka na afo tara gi mmiri. Q buɾu nà m gbachi nkịtị, i tisaa ezina salvar a, chulakwuo nwata qma a m chọtara Ezinna (p.25).

(I don’t want to see any person that will bring problem in this my family. Chioma... I thought you have no longer had bad character. Why I am telling you this is because you are very wicked. If I do nothing, you will destabilize this family and send away this good girl I brought for Ezinna).

Women are presented through Chukwuma’s comment as being cruel and a serious impediment to peaceful co-existence in the family. They impede peace in the family and this can bring separation and at times lead to divorce. Chioma is portrayed as a ferocious person who, after causing her husband’s death because of her cruelty, also wants to destroy Ezinna’s family. Ezinna’s confusion about the matter makes Ngozika, who is grief-stricken report the matter to her parents, who handle it according to customs and traditions. Ngozika is so happy to have parents who support her in the case. All of a sudden, Ngozika is emotionally crippled by the news of her father’s death. She is perturbed, devastated and confused about life. She remembers her father who makes Chioma to be afraid of abusing her again. She is perplexed and whimpered. Chioma on her own part is happy because she now has chance to deal with Ngozika as she desires. Chioma goes to her father’s house very often because, according to her, nobody will query her again concerning whatever she does to Ngozika. The freedom and joy which the death of Ngozika’s father gives Chioma is indicated in the following excerpt:

Chioma na-echuzi ụlọ nna ya ka a na-echu mmiri. Q dighị ihe na-ato ya ka onwu nna Ngozika, maka na o nweghi onye ga-ajuzi ya ‘onye i na-egbu, o mere gi gịnị? Ma o bido gbawa Ngozika ka anụ (p.34).
(Chioma goes to her father’s house very often. Nothing makes her happier than the death of Ngozika’ father, because when she starts stinging her like a bee, nobody will ask her, ‘the person you are killing, what did she do to you?’).

Chioma vows to deal with Ngozika in such a way that a mad person will be better than her. She, therefore, meets a medicine-man who prepares her a charm that will make Ezinna hates Ngozika as pointed out below:

Chioma were ntutu ya taa, na ọ ga-emekata Ngozika ihe, onye ara akara ya mma. Chioma gara na nke otu dibja, dibia ahu gwoọọọ ra ọgụụ ọ ga-anye Ezinna ka o were kpọọ Ngozika asị (p.34).

(Chioma vows, that she will treat Ngozika in a way that, a mad person will be better than her. Chioma goes to a medicineman, who gives her a charm to make Ezinna hate Ngozika).

Chioma’s hatred for Ngozika and her use of diabolic means to destabilize Ngozika’s relationship with her (Ngozika’s) husband show that some women are instigators of domestic violence in the society. Such women are portrayed as cruel, treacherous, obdurate and gossiping. Chioma comes to her father’s house to try the medicine on Ezinna. The first thing she does in order to achieve her mission, is to bias her mother’s mind against Ngozika. She tells her unspeakable lies about Ngozika, in order to make her hate Ngozika as well, as the following excerpt shows:

Ihe izizi o mere bu na o bu uzọ gwawa nne ya ajọ ihe dj iche iche ọ sị na Ngozika na-eme n’ụlọ ha ka ọ wee ụbụnụmụ obi nwaanyị a ọ n’ebi Ngozika nọ, ka nwaanyị ahu wee kpọọ Ngozika asị. Ọ gbara nne ya na nke kacha ihe ojọọ niile ạ bu na Ngozika ewerela ọgụụ kpọọ Ezinna. Ọ sị nne ya, “Otu m siri mara ihe dj otu a bu na o nwere na nke otu onye dibja m gara, ọ gwa m na nwụnụe nwanne m nwoke anarala m nwanne m nwoke. Dibja a gbara m na o bu Ngozika mere ihe Ezinna ejighizi ele anyị anya dika otu o si eme bu mgbe ọ lụbeghị nwaanyị. Agaghị m
Chioma poisons her mother’s mind because of envy and hatred against Ngozika. Eberechukwu, her mother, dislikes Ngozika, her daughter-in-law, and helps Chioma to plot evil against her. They make life unbearable for Ngozika and use diabolical means to divert her husband’s attention from her in order to be controlling him. The evil action of the duo is captured below:

O jee n’akpa ahụ o’jiri bia, Ọweta ọgwụ ahụ ọ gwọtara maka Ezinna. E ji akwa ọcha were kechie ya. Ma ya bu ọgwụ na-eji ka unyi. Chioma were ọgwụ ahụ ghanyere Ezinna n’ofe. Ọ were ekuigwe kpagharia ofe ahụ nke ọma. Ihe niile wee bu ụrụ ofe onugbu (p.3).

(Chioma reaches for the bag she comes with and brings the charm she prepared for Ezinna. It is wrapped in white cloth. The charm is as black as charcoal. Chioma puts the charm in Ezinna’s soup. She uses...
This kind of attitude can trigger domestic violence in the family. Ngozika faces trials and tribulations when she comes back from her parent’s house. Ezinna changes his attitude towards her and their children as a result of the charmed food he ate. A mere sight of Ngozika and his children annoys him. He does not take care of Ngozika again talkless of eating her food. He degrades and beats her whenever he feels like, as expressed in the excerpt below:

Otu ụbọchị, Ezinna kpupụta Ngozika n’ezị wee kụpụ ya na afọ ime ya mkpurụ ọkwụrụ n’anya. Nwaanyị a wee bekata akwa ka mmadụ, wee bewe ka ewu (p.40).

(One day, Ezinna brings Ngozika outside and beats her mercilessly in her pregnant state. The woman cries bitterly).

Ngozika’s experience depicts that the interference of one’s mother and/or sister in one’s family affairs can destroy the cordial relationship that exists between a man and his family, which can in turn create an enabling environment for domestic violence. This is well illustrated by Ezinna’s physical abuse and battery of his wife. What could be more violent than beating a pregnant woman without considering the danger of such action? Ngozika, who is later delivered of the baby, loses it within three weeks. She has not recovered from the shock and grief before Chioma hatches yet another plot to send her packing from her matrimonial home.

She persuades her brother, Ezinna to send Ngozika away and marry another wife because she gives birth to only girls. She even arranges a girl called Njideka, for Ezinna and she visits him often in his matrimonial home. As if it is not enough, she collects Ngozika’s hair and part of her cloth to a medicine man who prepares a charm that affects Ngozika’s life and her cloth business. Although, she survives it but her business crumbled as a result she becomes a farmer in other to feed her children. Next, Chioma poisons her pot of soup, so as to eliminate her and her children.
But as God would have it, the children discover it and they get saved from the calamity. These types of malicious deeds can trigger violence in a peaceful home. Ezinna, as a result of the spell casts on him, dislikes Ngozika and tries to kill her and marry Njideka but his father, Chukwuma, saves the situation.

Some women secretly suffer this type of humiliation without raising an alarm. They are unwilling to tell anyone even close friends and their immediate family because they are ashamed to let anyone know about their intimate family problems. But in the case of Ngozika, she informs her mother about the emotional trauma she receives from her in-laws. Since suffering has become the order of the day, her mother shares in her suffering. Being a prayerful woman she does everything within her power to save her daughter and grand children from death especially, when Chioma invites ‘Ajaala’ a deity to wipe out Ngozika and her children. This is shown in the excerpt below:

Chioma gara kpọọ ajala di n’Abara ka o bia kpochapụ Ngozika na umu ya... Nnukwu ọrịa bịa jide Ngozika na umu ya. Ngozika dina otu akụkwụ na-ekwo ọnwụ ọnwụ, umu ya edina n’akụkwụ nke ọzọ na-eche mgbe oge nke ha ga-ezu ka ihe ga-eri nri bia rachkwuo ofe (p.54).

(Chioma invites Ajaala of Abara to wipe out Ngozika and her children...Ngozika and her children fall sick. Ngozika lies on one side at the point of death and her children, at the other side waiting to die along with their mother).

The pitiful condition of Ngozika and her children show the level of inhuman treatment a sister-in-law can mete out to her brother’s family because she hates his wife. Some of the wives die as a result of this kind of wicked act. Ngozika’s mother dies because of her daughter’s suffering indicating how the consequence of women’s violence against women in a family can affect other relations. Chioma, who rejoices about Ngozika’s mother’s death, does not relent in her attempts to kill Ngozika and her children, especially her only son Amaechi, as expressed in the following:
Women's Violence against Women in Ofomata's Dibia

Chioma ekpebiela na onye o ga-ebu ụzo nwetagodu bu Ngozika. Ka o were nwee iche dowe Amaechi n’oche o ga-ano ma gụkwaa ya aha o’ga na-aza (p.88).

(Chioma decides to kill Ngozika first to be able to get Amaechi in her trap).

The first thing Chioma does is to spread poison on the way Ngozika follows to the market and as soon as she crosses it, the poison enters her body. She feels something like fire burning inside her. She swells up and becomes weak. She would have been a dead person if not for the sake of her friend, Chinelo, who calls a medicineman, Ikeoha. Ikeoha cures Ngozika and removes the spell Chioma casts on Ezinna. Ikeoha’s advice to Ezinna also, portrays Chioma’s evil act as the cause of violence in Ezinna’s household. Chioma’s several attempts to kill Amaechi does not work out even when she spread poison on the road that leads to his school as well as when she appears in form of a snake to kill him. At the end, Chioma receives her punishment by losing her only son and this makes her to know how it feels to be in pains.

Chioma’s mischievous acts express instances of women’s violence against women within the family. This type of violence can be seen as an impediment to women empowerment. How can women be empowered when violence against them is the order of the day. One of the ways of achieving women empowerment is by stopping violence against them from their husbands, in-laws or any other member of their husbands’ families. Although, women are portrayed as those that can endure any type of oppression and persevere to the end. Ngozika, upon all her sufferings, remains faithfully in her husband’s house; struggles to feed her children single handedly and at last wins back her husband’s love.

Women’s violence against women is widespread. At least one out of every three women experiences violence during her lifetime, most often in the hand of someone she knows or loves. Usually, the victims of the violence are mostly women but this not always the case. Women’s violence not only causes damage to its
immediate victims but also to any child who witnesses it or lives in a household where the violence is taking place. However, there is need to have a violent-free family by preventing, investigating and punishing all forms of violence against women in the home, workplace, the community or society, etc. Women's violence against women encouraged by any form of custom, tradition or practices in the name of religion or culture should be condemned and eliminated. Efforts should be made to develop and utilize legislative, educational, social and other measures aimed at the prevention of violence, including dissemination of information, legal literacy campaigns and the training of legal, judicial and health personnel. Parents also should teach their children early in life about violence and more so, how to express their anger and frustration in life. They should instill in them situations that could turn violent and how to avoid abusive behaviour in their relationships. All these measures when taken will help to empower women and strengthen them and their economic independence, and to protect and promote the full enjoyment of all their rights and fundamental freedoms.

References
Women's Violence against Women in Ofomata’s Dibia


